

Federal Communications Commission
Washington DC

Concerning RM-1087 through RM-10870

Dear Commissioners,

While the opportunity exists, I would like to offer my two cents concerning the proposed restructuring of Amateur Radio Service licensing. I will confine my comments to the particular issue I consider to be most important, that of International Morse Code proficiency.

I urge the Commission to reject the implicit claim by entities proposing partial or complete elimination of a code proficiency requirement, that Morse is somehow irrelevant in today's world. I believe this to be an erroneous and dangerous conclusion.

As I understand it, the original intent of including Morse proficiency in Amateur Service licensing was to provide America with an embedded resource of citizens adept in a basic, worst-case form of radio communication, one which could come in handy in times of regional or national emergency.

Since 9/11/01, every American's concept of just what sort of emergencies can arise in today's world has shifted mightily. To keep pace with these realities, it is, I think, our collective duty to shore up our communications skills, not let them wither.

As an amateur operator for more than 30 years, I can testify that Morse Code communication is often possible when voice communication is not. Simple dashes and dots are low-tech, can punch through high interference and can be heard over great distances at very, very low power, such as might be the case from a disaster zone when battery power is all there is. I have communicated many times with other amateurs at distances of over 1,000 miles using just 1 or 2 watts of power. Each such contact is a reminder to me how valuable Morse code is, and how important it is that it remain standard knowledge in the amateur community. In this age of terrorism, it is not a leap to see the retention of code proficiency as a national security issue.

There are nearly 700,000 licensed hams in the United States. The Commission's goal must be to keep them as an embedded emergency communications resource, well-versed in all its forms, including simple telegraphy.

Morse Code is not an outmoded curiosity. It is quite possibly more relevant than it has ever been.

I recommend a standard of 5 words per minute for Novices, 13 wpm for General Class amateurs and 20 wpm for Extra Class amateurs. I further propose an end to the current system of license renewals. Retest us every five years. You heard me.

Really, I fail to see how the ham radio lobbyists can honestly expect the United States Government to protect ham spectrum if we

reduce ourselves to a group of rag-chewing hobbyists. Shouldn't
we have value to our nation?

Respectfully,

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